

AS coursework

Your questions answered

Symond Burrows takes you through some frequently asked questions in relation to the new AQA AS coursework, providing answers that will put your mind at rest that you are meeting the exam board's new assessment criteria.

For your AS AQA coursework, you have to choose two from three roles, one of which is an official



For the practical component of the AS PE course, students must choose two out of the following three roles:

- performer
- coach/leader
- official

Each role is equally weighted. You can choose to focus on one activity in both roles, or you can do each role in a different activity. Your ability is assessed by demonstration of skills and techniques in practical situations.

Frequently asked questions

How much does my AS coursework count for?

The coursework in Unit 2 counts for 40% of your overall AS mark.

Can I do the same activity for both my roles?

Yes, this is not a problem. For example, you can do netball as both a performer and an official if you wish. Or you can do a different activity if you prefer — for example, netball as a performer and volleyball as an official. What you have to do is two different roles at AS (and one at A2).

Does the role at A2 have to be different from the role at AS?

No, it can be if you wish but you can specialise with a role and activity you did at AS if you prefer.

Do I have to do my two roles at AS from a different activity category?

No. The activity categories 1–3 group together activities with similar characteristics only for ease of assessment. You can do water polo and lacrosse from category 1 as a performer and coach respectively if you wish.

Category 1 activities are divided into ten assessment areas, each worth 5 marks, for example core skills. Category 2 activities consist of two events, strokes or lifts, as appropriate to the activity. The more aesthetically based activities in category 3 all have their own individual assessment criteria, so it is important to look at dance, diving, trampolining and gymnastics separately.

So I can't do two sports as a performer at AS?

You could do, but only your best one would count. There is nothing wrong with trying different activities or different roles and taking your two best scores at AS (one at A2) from two different roles, whatever the activity may be (as long as the activity is included on the specification, or can easily be adapted from one that is).

Do I need to do any written work at AS?

There is no exam board requirement to keep any detailed portfolios of your performing, coaching/leadership, or officiating experiences during your AS/A2 studies. In certain roles, and with certain activities, research and planning before-

hand may well help you to perform better. For example, looking at the rules associated with refereeing a basketball game and the signals used; planning a session working on some core skills with a small group of Year 6 netball players at a local primary school and focusing on one or two of them as appropriate during the actual delivery of the session. There are also assessment criteria in certain activities or roles that require self-evaluation or self-analysis — for example, when a coaching session has been delivered to a golfer — which can be completed in a written format as evidence of the process, or can be undertaken in a 5–10 minute verbal discussion with your assessor, who will probably be your teacher. However, the most important thing is how you perform in the practical situation in your chosen roles and activities against the assessment criteria outlined in the specification.

If I do a national governing body leadership, coaching and/or officiating award, does this guarantee me a good mark?

No. Some awards are excellent and give a plenty of opportunities for 'hands-on' coaching and sports leadership. Others are given mainly for attendance and may not relate to the AQA assessment criteria. Completing a CSLA or a level 1 coaching or equivalent officiating award will

obviously help you to gain skills, experiences and qualifications that will benefit you. But the key to success is to ensure that you can perform well in relation to the exam board assessment criteria. (The CSLA provides insurance cover as part of your course fee, if this is a concern to you or individuals you are coaching or officiating.)

Is there a specific age group I have to coach or officiate?

No, it is entirely up to you who you coach or officiate. You want to be seen in the best light possible in relation to the set criteria. Children of primary school age, your peers or older club performers are all acceptable as subjects. Performers who are already at the excellence stage of performance are likely to have very little to improve and it will be difficult to identify faults in various core skills, as well as possible ways to correct such errors. Such performers are therefore less desirable as subjects.

If I coach or officiate outside of school or college, do I need a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check?

This is up to the school or club that you wish to coach or officiate in. It should be the case that in the majority of situations there will be a qualified adult supervising your work at all times, who will step in as and when required. A CRB check should not therefore be needed

because there is adult supervision by a qualified coach or member of staff who has already been checked and approved. If you are involved in potentially dangerous activities, such as trampolining or gymnastics, a qualified member of staff should always be present, closely supervising and running sessions but still enabling you to perform tasks that meet the assessment criteria. For example, you focus on analysing a performer on a trampoline who is being taken through a session by a teacher or coach, but you do the analysis and evaluation as well as suggesting things to work on to improve core skills and routines.

How many people do I have to coach or officiate?

This depends on the activity. For example, in swimming, gymnastics, golf and horse riding, one-on-one situations are fine. With activities such as team games, you may wish to coach or officiate up to six individuals in drills and practices related to the core skills set for the particular activity, but focus on one individual in relation to coaching in the 'conditioned games' section. The key thing again is to show that you are capable of performing in your chosen role and activity in relation to the set criteria.

If the activity or role I want to do is not offered at my school or college, can I still do it, with

As a coach, you can lead with any age group



help from an external coach or official to do the assessment?

Yes, if your teacher agrees. You will need to get copies of the assessment criteria copied for your activity and role so that the person doing the assessment knows how to assess you. You should also get video footage of yourself performing in your activity and role out of school or college, so that your teacher can make sure the marks have been awarded correctly. This is also important if the exam board requests video evidence to support marks awarded, and is a good back-up to have in case of injury or poor performance at moderation. When videoing at AS, it is important to include core skills, conditioned practices and events as appropriate to the activities or roles you have chosen. A good way of organising your filming is to go

through each of the assessment criteria as they appear in the specification.

Are some activities easier than others?

They are only easy if you can perform them to an excellent standard. The new assessment criteria give the opportunity to experience a variety of different activities in three different roles. To achieve high marks, you need to perform to very high standards in whatever roles or activities you perform. What is easy for you may not be so easy for others. If you feel there are activities or roles that place lower demands on you, and they still enable you to meet the assessment criteria, then do them.

Can you give me some key points to note about the AQA coursework assessment?

Most of this has been covered above but to summarise:

- Choose two roles and the activity/activities that will gain you best marks.
- The sports leader or coach role should not put others at risk. Qualified supervision is essential.
- The captain of a team is not a sports leader.
- As a coach or sports leader, it is important to not simply set up drills and practices but to actively coach or lead to try to improve performers.
- Sports leader or officiating awards cannot be used to replace the practical assessment process in relation to set criteria from AQA, but they should help you to score better marks.
- Keep video and/or written evidence as appropriate to support marks awarded and to help you to perform better.

Symond Burrows is an experienced coursework advisor and moderator.